

CIVILIAN PERSONNEL OPERATIONS CENTER MANAGEMENT AGENCY

MERIT PROMOTION AND PLACEMENT PLAN

1. **PURPOSE:** To establish policy, assign responsibilities, and prescribe procedures for the Merit Promotion and Inservice Placement Plan which are consistent with the Department of the Army (DA) and Office of Personnel Management (OPM) regulations governing the filling of positions by promotion or other internal placement action.
2. **POLICY:** Positions covered by this plan will be filled solely on the basis of merit and fitness without regard to political, religious, or labor organization affiliation or non-affiliation, marital status, race, color, sex, national origin, non-disqualifying physical handicap or age, and shall be based solely on job-related criteria.
3. **SCOPE:**
 - a. This plan is applicable to all organizational elements of the CONUS Civilian Personnel Operation Centers (CPOCs). This plan is applicable to all competitive service positions in the CONUS CPOCs with the exception of the positions identified at mandatory DA wide referral levels, which are filled under the provisions of applicable career program regulations.
 - b. Where provisions of this plan differ from negotiated labor agreements, the provisions of the negotiated agreements will apply. When provisions of this plan differ from changes in law or regulation, the changes in law or regulation will apply.
 - c. Where this plan is silent, the flexibilities provided by regulation or guidance from higher authority are preserved.
4. **GENERAL REQUIREMENTS:**
 - a. **Equal Employment Opportunity:** Evaluation of qualifications, ranking of eligibles, and selection for promotion will be made on a fair and equitable basis without discrimination for any non-merit reason such as race, color, religion, sex, national origin, politics, marital status, physical handicap, age membership or non-membership in an employee organization.
 - b. **Nepotism and Personal Favoritism:** No official may, in recommending or selecting candidates for promotion, show or give preference to any candidate based upon factors not pertinent to the candidate's qualifications for performing work of a higher level including personal friendship, kinship or political connections. A public official may not appoint, employ, promote, or advance one of his/her relatives (by blood or

marriage) to a position in his/her agency, nor may he/she advocate a relative for appointment, employment, promotion, or advancement in the agency. Likewise, an individual may not be appointed, employed, promoted or advanced if the action was advocated by a public official who is serving in or exercising jurisdiction or control over the agency and who is a relative of the individual. These provisions apply to all individuals in the rating, ranking, evaluating, and/or selecting processes for actions under this regulation.

5. **COMPETITIVE ACTIONS:** The following placement actions must be accomplished in accordance with the competitive procedures of this plan:
 - a. Permanent promotion to higher graded position or to a position with more promotion potential than any position previously held on a permanent basis in the competitive service.
 - b. Reassignment or demotion to a position with more promotion potential than any position previously held on a permanent basis in the competitive service except as permitted by reduction in force regulations.
 - c. Time-limited promotion for more than 120 days (or more than 179 days to maintain continuity of essential functions during base closures and major drawdowns) to a higher graded position. Prior service during the preceding 12 months under noncompetitive time-limited promotions and noncompetitive details to higher graded positions count toward the 120 day total. A temporary promotion may be made permanent without further competition provided the temporary promotion was originally made under competitive procedures, and the fact that it may lead to a permanent promotion was made known to all potential candidates in the appropriate area of consideration.
 - d. Detail of more than 120 days (or more than 179 days to maintain continuity of essential functions during base closures and major drawdowns) to a higher graded position or to a position with higher promotion potential. Prior service during the preceding 12 months under noncompetitive detail to higher graded positions and noncompetitive time-limited promotion counts toward the 120 day total.
 - e. Selection for training, which is part of an authorized training agreement, part of a promotion program, or required by regulation before an employee may be considered for a promotion.
 - f. Appointment, transfer, or reinstatement to a position at a higher grade or with more promotion potential than any position previously held on a permanent basis in the competitive service.

- 6. EXCLUSIONS:** The following actions are excluded from the competitive procedures of this plan:
- a. Promotion resulting from the upgrading of a position without significant change in the duties and responsibilities due to issuance of a new classification standard or the correction of an initial classification error.
 - b. Placements made during or in lieu of reduction in force (RIF) as permitted by governing regulations.
 - c. Action involving statutory, regulatory or administrative placement, to include actions directed by higher command levels, arbitration decisions, court decisions, MSPB, local settlements, and discrimination complaint decisions.
 - d. Career Ladder Promotion. A promotion without further competition of an employee who was appointed in the competitive service from a civil service register, by direct hire, by noncompetitive appointment or noncompetitive conversion, or under the competitive promotion procedures of this plan for an assignment intended to prepare the employee for the position being filled (the intent must be made as a matter of record and career ladders must be documented).
 - e. Promotion to a grade previously held on a permanent basis in the competitive service (or in another merit system with which OPM has an interchange agreement) from which the employee was separated or demoted for other than performance or conduct reasons.
 - f. Promotion, reassignment, demotion, transfer, reinstatement, or detail to a position having no greater promotion potential than that of a position the employee currently holds or previously held on a permanent basis in the competitive service (or other merit system with which OPM has an interchange agreement) from which the employee was separated or demoted for other than performance or conduct reasons.
 - g. Promotion resulting from an employee's position being classified at a higher grade because of additional duties and responsibilities
 - h. Temporary promotions of 120 days or less (or for up to 179 days to maintain continuity of essential functions during base closures and major drawdowns). Prior service during the preceding 12 months under noncompetitive time-limited promotions and noncompetitive details to higher graded positions counts toward the 120 day total.
 - i. Detail to a higher graded position or a position with known promotion potential, of 120 days or less (or for up to 179 days to maintain continuity of essential functions during base closures and major

drawdowns). Prior service during the preceding 12 months under noncompetitive details to higher graded positions and noncompetitive time-limited promotions count toward the 120 day total.

- j. Promotion or placement of an employee entitled to noncompetitive priority consideration as corrective action for failure to be given proper consideration under the requirements of this plan.
- k. Impact of the person on the job as defined in the Introduction to the Position Classification Standards, when an exception to competitive procedures has been approved by the Department of the Army.
- l. Placement of employees who have eligibility for special consideration for repromotion. These employees are those who are receiving grade or pay retention benefits due to involuntary placement in lower grade or declination of functional transfer.
- m. Noncompetitive conversion of severely disabled individuals and promotion after conversion provided the position occupied has an established full performance level (career ladder).
- n. Noncompetitive conversion of students under Student Career Experience Program and promotion after conversion provided the position has an established full performance level (career ladder).
- o. Noncompetitive appointment of eligible veterans with a 30% or more disability who are serving on temporary appointments and promotion after conversion provided the position occupied has an established full performance level (career ladder).
- p. Noncompetitive appointment of Veterans Readjustment Appointment (VRA) eligibles and promotion after conversion provided the position occupied has an established full performance level (career ladder).
- q. Noncompetitive appointment of OPM interchange agreement eligibles, reinstatement eligibles, and Executive Order eligibles.
- r. Noncompetitive appointment of Worker-Trainees (e.g. Welfare-to-Work, etc.) and promotion after conversion provided the position has an established full performance level (career ladder).
- s. Other types of actions not specified above which are permitted by regulation and are consistent with the spirit and intent of the merit principles delineated in Title 5, United States Code.

7. RESPONSIBILITIES AND PROCEDURES:

- a. The CPOC is responsible for:

- (1) Administering the merit promotion and placement program to ensure that the provisions of this plan and the spirit and intent of Title 5 United States Code are met.
 - (2) Advising, assisting, and disseminating information pertaining to recruitment strategies; appropriate areas of consideration; development of crediting plans/job search plans; determining conditions of employment; and supervisory and employee responsibilities and regulatory requirements.
 - (3) Preparing merit promotion vacancy announcements/advertisements.
 - (4) Electronic distribution of vacancy announcements/advertisements.
 - (5) Hard copy distribution, if necessary, of vacancy announcements/advertisements when the area of consideration is extended beyond the CPAC's and the CPOC within the region where the vacancy under recruitment is located.
 - (6) Rating and ranking applications.
 - (7) Arranging and conducting rating/ranking panels when necessary.
 - (8) Issuing referral lists to the supervisor/manager.
 - (9) Notifying ineligible applicants, and applicants who are eligible, but not referred for selection consideration.
 - (10) Validating selections in accordance with law, rule and regulation.
 - (11) Providing information and data in response to inquiries.
 - (12) Maintaining records.
 - (13) Providing information on the merit promotion and placement program to the workforce.
 - (14) Making tentative job offers and establishing proposed effective dates.
 - (15) Responding to inquiries from applicants, managers, EEO officials, and other appropriate parties.
- b. Managers and supervisors are responsible for:
- (1) Communicating the provisions of this plan to employees.
 - (2) Anticipating personnel requirements and initiating appropriate action on a timely basis.

- (3) Reviewing and monitoring selection procedures to ensure compliance with the spirit of the affirmative action program goals and objectives and the merit principle of Title 5, United States Code.
 - (4) Assisting employees in applying for vacancies, and upon written request from employees, submitting applications or resumes/self nominations for merit promotion announcements/advertisements during the employee's absence for legitimate reasons.
 - (5) Developing recruitment strategies and identifying appropriate areas of consideration, with the assistance of the Staffing Services Division (SSD).
 - (6) Developing crediting plans, or approving and providing input to job search criteria, with the assistance of the SSD, as necessary.
 - (7) Obtaining any required organizational approvals for recruitment action.
 - (8) Promptly making and documenting selections from referral lists.
 - (9) Obtaining necessary reviews of the selection by higher management officials.
 - (10) Promptly returning documented referral lists to the SSD.
 - (11) Notifying candidates on referral lists issued to them of non-selection.
 - (12) Providing assistance and counseling to employees on self-development opportunities, application procedures, and reasons for non-selection.
- c. Employees are responsible for:
- (1) Reviewing designated applicable web sites (e.g. Civilian Personnel Online (CPOL) or USAJobs) for job advertisements/announcements.
 - (2) Careful review of job advertisements/announcements prior to application for promotion consideration to determine whether or not they may meet the specific experience and training requirements for the position.
 - (3) Applying for jobs for which they are qualified and interested by providing information and forms requested on vacancy announcements/advertisements.
 - (4) Notifying their supervisors/managers in writing of job opportunities for which they are interested in applying during periods of legitimate absence. Employee must furnish necessary information required by

promotion announcements in order that the supervisor may forward applications for the position desired to include electronic resumes or self-nomination decisions.

- (5) Seeking advice and assistance from their supervisors on the provisions of this plan, preparation of application materials, and self-development opportunities.
 - (6) Promptly notifying the designated office of acceptance or declination of a job offer after notification of selection.
- d. The Civilian Personnel Operations Center Management Agency (CPOCMA) is responsible for:
- (1) Responding to inquiries regarding the content, procedures and requirements of this plan.
 - (2) Periodically reviewing this plan for regulatory compliance.
 - (3) Soliciting opinions, comments and suggestions from the CPOCs and recognized employee organizations regarding the requirements of the plan.

8. LOCATING CANDIDATES:

- a. Area of Consideration:
- (1) The area of consideration must be sufficiently broad to ensure the availability of a reasonable number of high quality candidates, taking into account the nature and level of the position to be filled, merit principles, EEO affirmative action goals and objectives, and applicable regulations and requirements of negotiated agreements.
 - (2) The area of consideration will be identified in the merit promotion vacancy announcement/job advertisement.
 - (3) As a minimum, the area of consideration will include the CPOC and the co-located CPAC within the region where the vacancy under recruitment is located plus applications received by the closing date of the vacancy announcement from Department of the Army employees with competitive status who are outside the minimum area of consideration. (DA Voluntary Applicants).
 - (4) To the maximum extent practical, immediately appointable family members who are relocating to accompany DA military and civilian sponsors and candidates eligible for special noncompetitive appointments (e.g. VRA, severely disabled, disabled veterans,

Welfare-to-Work) should be considered for competitive service jobs within the restraints set by the special appointing authorities.

(5) The area of consideration may be expanded beyond the minimum area at any time in the recruitment process.

- b. Application procedures will be described in job kits or merit promotion vacancy announcements and/or job advertisements.
 - c. Job Advertisements/Announcements: Job Advertisements or Announcements will be published on CPOL when filling vacancies through the competitive procedures described in this plan.
- (1) For positions filled under RESUMIX/Standard Automated Inventory and Referral System (STAIRS) procedures, job advertisements/announcements will include:
- (a) Job advertisement/announcement number, opening and closing dates.
 - (b) Position title/series/grade (to include full performance level, if appropriate) organization and location.
 - (c) Sufficient information for the employee to understand the area of consideration.
 - (d) A summary of the job duties.
 - (e) For Job Announcements only, a statement of the required qualification requirements or information on where the qualification requirements may be found.
 - (f) Designation of any special requirements.
 - (g) A statement of Equal Employment Opportunity.
 - (h) If the position being filled is one with known promotion potential and a subsequent career promotion from it is possible, this fact will be stated in the job advertisement/announcement.
 - (i) Instructions on how to apply or information on where the instructions may be found.
- (2) For positions filled through alternate procedures and using a content valid rating methodology, job announcements will also include a list of the knowledges, skills and abilities required by the position and against which applicants will be rated and ranked.

- (3) Job advertisements/announcements will be open for receipt of applications for a minimum period of 7 calendar days.

9. COMPETITIVE PROCEDURES AND CANDIDATE EVALUATION:

- a. The CPOC will normally use an automated rating and referral system such as the skills based RESUMIX or STAIRS for filling positions under this plan. Under RESUMIX/STAIRS, in order to apply, applicants will be required to submit a resume for processing into an automated database. Incomplete or unscannable resumes will be rejected. All resumes received, accepted, and verified will be stored in the database. Internal applicants (employees serviced by the CPOC) will receive consideration for jobs by self-nominating against open job advertisement/announcement. External applicants (applicants not serviced by the CPOC) will receive initial consideration by submitting a resume and supplemental data in response to a job announcement. After submitting a resume and supplemental data, external applicants may self-nominate for subsequent vacancies for a period of one year from receipt. Self-nominations must be received by the closing date of the job advertisement/announcement.
- b. To be eligible for promotion or placement under this plan, applicants must meet all eligibility requirements and minimum qualification requirements prescribed by OPM within 30 days of the closing date of the announcement. Applicants for promotion or placement into a job having greater growth potential than their current job (or one previously held) must have a rating of fully successful or higher in their most recent annual performance appraisal. In the absence of an appraisal, applicant will be presumed to be fully successful.
- c. The resumes of the employees who self-nominated will be matched against the required and desirable skills criteria defined by the selecting official. Applicants who meet the OPM defined minimum qualifications will be referred or not referred based on the results of comparison to the skills criteria. The automated functions are as follows:
 - (1) Using the job description of record for the position being filled and RESUMIX, the SSD specialist extracts the skills required by the position and forwards (e-mail) them to the manager/supervisor for addition or deletion of skills; identification of mandatory and desired skills; and approval of the job search criteria to be used.
 - (2) The SSD enters the job search criteria into the automated system.
 - (3) The SSD prepares and publishes the job advertisement/announcement on the DA web page and/or other automated bulletin boards.

- (4) Employees serviced by the CPOC will self-nominate using the procedures outlined in the job advertisement/announcement.
 - (5) Applicants' resumes will be matched against the required and desirable skills criteria. The SSD will check resumes for basic qualifications, time-in-grade (where applicable), performance appraisals, and any other unique position requirements.
 - (6) To be referred, candidates must at a minimum possess all the required skills in addition to meeting OPM qualification standards and other regulatory requirements. Best qualified candidates (those referred) are identified based on the degree to which they also possess the desired skills relative to other qualified applicants.
 - (7) Best qualified candidates are referred in alphabetical order. The Referral List along with resumes is sent to the selecting official.
 - (8) Referral lists will be valid for a period of 14 working days from the date issued. The CPOC Director may grant reasonable extensions when requested by the selecting official.
- d. Alternately, for those positions for which it is impractical or undesirable to use RESUMIX/STAIRS or a similar skills-based automated system, the CPOC will use job announcements and a content valid rating methodology, which determines applicant qualifications based on the possession of the knowledges, skills and abilities required for the job through assessment of an applicant's training, experience and education. Or the CPOC may use job announcements and other professionally accepted and OPM approved candidate evaluation methodologies, which assess applicant qualifications through the use of self-assessment questionnaires. When there are ten or fewer candidates who meet minimum qualifications, simplified candidate evaluation procedures may be used.
- e. Selection Procedures:
- (1) A reasonable number of best qualified candidates will be referred to the selecting official, along with any candidates from non-competitive or other recruitment sources.
 - (2) Selecting officials have the right to consider and/or select candidates from any appropriate source in accordance with governing regulations and negotiated agreements.
 - (3) The selecting official may select or not select from among a group of best qualified candidates referred for selection consideration.

Selections will be based solely on job-related criteria and the reasons for selection will be annotated on the referral list.

- (4) As part of the selection process, selecting officials will consider the host installation's approved Affirmative Action Plan (AAP) and review all applications referred.
 - (5) Selecting officials have the option to interview any, all or none of the candidates on the referral list.
 - (6) Selecting officials should maintain records, which document their selection.
- f. Selection Notifications And Effective/Release Dates: The SSD will notify selected candidates, make tentative job offers and establish entrance on duty or proposed effective dates. Normally, promotions or position changes of employees selected under merit promotion and internal placement procedures for positions outside their current supervisory unit, will be effective the beginning of the second pay period following receipt of the selection in SSD and/or notification to the losing activity. By mutual agreement, the gaining and losing activities may negotiate a shorter or longer release date as local requirements dictate. Release dates for selectees from outside the installation will be negotiated between the gaining CPOC and the selectee's servicing personnel office/CPAC.

10. RECORDS.

- a. Placement records will be subject to review by internal evaluation methods and by higher authority. Records and other applicable regulations used to document placement actions will be maintained for a minimum of 5 years.
- b. Sufficient documentation will be available within the placement records to provide a clear audit trail and permit a complete reconstruction of any action under this plan.

11. CORRECTIVE ACTIONS.

- a. Immediate action should be taken to correct a violation or program deficiency. Appropriate corrective action required as a result of a procedural, regulatory or program violation of this plan or regulation will be accomplished in accordance with relevant sections of Title 5, United States Code, and the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR).
- b. In order to assure that actions are processed in accordance with regulatory and/or procedural requirements, corrections of errors or oversight will be made as soon as they are discovered to include

correcting any outstanding referral lists. The promotion records will be so documented.

12. GRIEVANCES AND COMPLAINTS.

- a. An employee who believes that governing procedures were not properly followed in filling a position under this plan, or who believes that his or her qualifications were not properly evaluated may grieve or complain under applicable grievance procedures or in accordance with an appropriate negotiated agreement. Failure to be selected from a properly constituted list is not a grievable issue except where non-selection was due to discrimination and/or the conduct of a prohibited personnel practice.
- b. Allegations of discrimination will be considered under relevant provisions of the Equal Employment Opportunity Program.
- c. Management and the CPOC will make every effort to informally resolve employee concerns regarding placement actions under this plan.

13. ORDER OF CONSIDERATION

- a. Statutory, Reemployment or Restoration Placements.
- b. Directed Placements (Courts, MSPB, EEOC) or other corrective actions.
- c. RIF actions, or placements in lieu of RIF.
- d. Local repromotion eligibles.
- e. Certain actions permitted under the DoD Program for Stability of Civilian Employment (job swaps, medical accommodations, etc.).
- f. Reemployment Priority List (RPL) registrants for positions at or below grade last held by the registrant.
- g. DoD Priority Placement Program (PPP) registrants and the remainder of the RPL candidates.
- h. Special consideration after failure to receive consideration under the Merit Promotion Plan.
- i. ICTAP eligibles.
- j. All other competitive/noncompetitive placement actions involving DoD candidates.
- k. Selection of candidates from non-DoD sources.